

Message Text

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15

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

ACDA-07 OMB-01 AID-05 /082 W

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P R 130847Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6567

INFO SECDEF WASHDC

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINCPAC HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 2722

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR MARR KS KN US

SUBJ: REPORTED APPEARANCE OF NORTH KOREAN TANKS IN DMZ USED TO
BOLSTER ATTACKS ON U.S. CONGRESSIONAL CRITICISM OF ROK

REF: (A) SEOUL 2652 (DTG 100356Z APR 76)

(B) STATE 88116 (DTG 122352Z APR 76)

(C) SEOUL 2721 (DTG 130845Z APR 76) NOTAL

1. PRIME FRONT-PAGE, INTERNAL, AND EDITORIAL PLAY HAS
BEEN GIVEN IN KOREAN PRESS OVER PAST WEEKEND TO REPORT
THAT TWO NORTH KOREAN TANKS WERE SIGHTED WITHIN NORTHERN
SECTOR OF EAST-CENTRAL DMZ APRIL 7.

2. ROK FORCES REPORTED SPOTTING, ON APRIL 7, TWO NORTH
KOREAN TANKS MOVING IN SOUTHERLY DIRECTION WITHIN
NORTHERN SECTOR OF DMZ AT COORDINATES 38 DEGREES 19
MINUTES 30 SECONDS NORTH, 127 DEGREES 31 MINUTES 20
SECONDS EAST. TANKS WERE SAID TO HAVE ENTERED DMZ AT
1255 THAT DAY, AND DEPARTED IT TO NORTH SOME FOUR HOURS
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LATER. SUBSEQUENT UNC INVESTIGATION OF INCIDENT DEVELOPED

NO SIGNIFICANT ELABORATIVE INFORMATION, AND SPECIFIC TYPE OF ARMOR INVOLVED NOT IDENTIFIED. NO U.S. PERSONNEL WERE PRESENT IN AREA OF CLAIMED INTRUSION AND NO INDEPENDENT CONFIRMATION OF ARMOR ACTIVITY THROUGH AVAILABLE U.S. SOURCES HAS BEEN POSSIBLE.

3. UNC SIDE OF MILITARY ARMISTICE COMMISSION (MAC), ON APRIL 8, PASSED ROUTINE MESSAGE REGARDING REPORTED INTRUSION TO KPA/CPV THROUGH REGULAR MAC JOINT DUTY OFFICER CHANNEL, REQUESTING INVESTIGATION OF INCIDENT.

4. SUNDAY APRIL 11 BROUGHT FEATURE ARTICLES, COMPLETE WITH FILE PHOTOS OF LATEST SOVIET MODEL TANKS IN PYONGYANG'S INVENTORY, WHICH STATED THAT "THE APPEARANCE OF THE NORTH KOREAN TANKS IN THE DMZ HAD A SERIOUS PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT ON THE NATION", AND WHICH "RAISED A SPECTRE AHEAD OF THE HORROR" OF THE NORTH'S 1950 INVASION.

5. USE OF ARMORED ASSAULT "VEHICLE" TO DATE HAS BEEN CAPPED BY ONE OF THE SHARPEST EDITORIAL CAMPAIGNS WE'VE SEEN YET EMPHASIZING DPRK THREAT AND ATTACKING U.S. CONGRESSIONAL CRITICS OF ROKG, PARTICULARLY REPRESENTATIVE FRASER. MASS-CIRCULATION HANGUK ILBO, IN APRIL 11 EDITORIAL CHARACTERIZED REPORTED TANK INTRUSION AS "PRELUDE TO ABROGATION OF KOREAN ARMISTICE AGREEMENT, SUGGESTING FURTHER INTENSIFICATION OF MILITARY PROVOCATIONS, AND THREATENING ASSAULT ENCOURAGED BY CRITICISM OF SOME AMERICAN LEGISLATORS AND THE WHIRLWIND OF THE U.S. ELECTION CAMPAIGN." EDITORIALIST EXPECTED NOTHING TO COME OF UNC-REQUESTED INVESTIGATION, AND, ANTICIPATING NORTHERN EXPLOITATION OF ANY WEAKNESSES DETECTED, ENCOURAGED KOREANS TO STRENGTHEN THEIR NATIONAL SECURITY.

6. COMMENT: WHETHER NORTH KOREAN TANKS APPEARED FORTUITOUSLY IN DMZ FOR KOREANS AT THIS TIME CANNOT BE EITHER CONFIRMED OR REFUTED. WHAT IS CLEAR IS THAT CLAIM HAS BEEN BLOWN COMPLETELY OUT OF PROPORTION AS MAJOR MILITARY MENACE, AND WOVEN INTO CONTINUING, CONFIDENTIAL

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CAREFULLY ORCHESTRATED ATTACKS UPON U.S. CONGRESSIONAL CRITICS OF ROK.

7. WILL COVER OTHER DMZ INCIDENTS DESCRIBED REF B SEPTEL AFTER DISCUSSION WITH UNC. OUR INITIAL REACTION IS THAT NEITHER FIRING INCIDENT SIGNIFICANT. SNEIDER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, DMZ, NATIONAL SECURITY, TANKS (COMBAT VEHICLES)
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 13 APR 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976SEOUL02722
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760139-0523
From: SEOUL
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760467/aaaaceua.tel
Line Count: 114
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 SEOUL 2652
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 FEB 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <05 FEB 2004 by morefirh>; APPROVED <16 SEP 2004 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: REPORTED APPEARANCE OF NORTH KOREAN TANKS IN DMZ USED TO BOLSTER ATTACKS ON U.S. CONGRESSIONAL CRITICISM OF ROK
TAGS: PFOR, MARR, KS, KN, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006